



Our theme for assembly this term
is
Courage

'Be strong and courageous: do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.' Joshua 1.9



National Year of Reading



2026 is the National year of reading, a campaign by the Department of Education and national Literacy Trust to address the steep decline in reading amongst children, young people and adults. Research shows that reading for pleasure is crucial for development, linking to better wellbeing, literacy, and future earnings.

At Stratford-sub-Castle Primary School, reading is promoted as an intrinsic part of teaching and learning; it forms a pivotal part of our curriculum. We believe that learning to read and reading for pleasure transforms children's lives.

Reading is not just a good way to fill the time. It has important and far-reaching benefits which go beyond a love of a good book. When children and young people enjoy reading, they are more likely to create a habit and read more often which in turn will help to build vital reading skills and bring with it a wider range of benefits...

Reading for pleasure can help grow empathy

Enjoying books and discovering new perspectives within the pages of a story can be a great way to introduce children to a range of experiences and viewpoints. The more a child reads, the more likely they are to be exposed to new narratives which can help them develop empathy.

A love of reading can build a child's confidence

The National Literacy Trust's [recent reading for pleasure research](#) showed that 26.0% of children and young people who read in their free time at least once a month said it helps them to be confident.

Reading for enjoyment can spark imagination...

...and provide escape as well as inspire creativity. Even fantasy can still speak truth to a child about their place in this world.

Reading can expand horizons

A book can provide children with a way to discover new worlds, meet new people and learn about the past. Whether that's through non-fiction books and autobiographies, or books and magazines exploring historical events or figures.

Reading for pleasure can support your child's learning

Recent research also revealed that twice as many children and young people who enjoy reading in their free time have above average reading skills than children who don't enjoy it (34.2% vs 15.7%) - reading skills which will support them in their school journeys and beyond.

At Stratford we believe passionately that reading is a vital life skill and we are committed to ensuring that all children become fluent readers as quickly as possible. Please read attached information that explains how we teach reading at Stratford and how you can support your child with reading at home.

Please see the schools website for more information about how we teach reading at Stratford
<https://stratford-sub-castle.wilts.sch.uk/learning/english/reading/>

Attendance

Following our termly review of the registers we have noted that there are some children who have attendance below 90%. While I appreciate the winter terms are the worse for illness, regular attendance is an essential foundation to ensure that every child has the chance to fulfil their potential. Absence from school can seriously disrupt pupils' continuity of learning. Not only do they miss out on taught lessons, but many children find it difficult to catch up academically and socially when they return to school.

95% attendance equates to half a day off every two weeks for a whole year

90% attendance equates to a day off every two weeks for a whole year

85% attendance equates to one and a half days off every two weeks for a whole year

80% attendance equates to one whole day off every week for a whole year

We have also noted that some children are regularly late. Please may I remind you that the school gates open at 08:40 and school starts at 08:50. 08:50 is the time the register is taken and lessons start straight after this.

If a child arrives late for school on a regular basis, learning really can suffer. This is for a number of reason but just on a time basis:

5 minutes every day	3 days
10 minutes every day	6.5 days
15 minutes every day	10 days
20 minutes every day	13 days
19 minutes every day	19 days

Please find attached a copy of our attendance policy. If you need any help or advice regarding your child's attendance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Parking

I understand how difficult it can be to park around school. When the school was built in 1840 there were not many cars on the road! However, it has been brought to my attention that people, especially when collecting at the end of the day, are parking on the double yellow lines at the corner of Mill Lane on both sides, parking in the bus stop and doing 3 point turns in the road while children are walking along the pavements. There was very nearly an accident this week as someone did a three point turn and didn't realise the boot of their car was over the pavement where a child was running past. We have many children who walk home on their own. Please help us all keep our children safe by parking sensibly.

I do have number plates of cars but would rather give everyone the chance to park and drive safely before 'naming and shaming'.

Please park sensibly, I would rather your child was collected slightly late than someone getting hurt or an accident happening. Many thanks.

School Disco: Friday 23rd January 2026

Please note this event is for children from our school only.

(Pre-school siblings are very welcome if parents stay as well!)

Parents are very welcome to stay at the EYFS/ KS1 Disco and we always need help for the second session if you can stay for that. KS1 children must not stay for the KS2 disco, without the permission of myself (and only in very special circumstances).

Please buy your tickets before Friday so we can plan for the event. Tickets will be on sale on the school gate, before school, week beginning Monday 19th January.

ALL TICKETS ARE £2 and include a drink in the price, they can also be purchased on the evening if needed. Cakes and drinks are also on sale during the evening.

Reception, Y1 and Y2 Disco 6:00pm – 7:00pm (Enter by side door to hall from big playground and exit via the front door onto the small playground.)

Y3, Y4, Y5 and Y6 Disco 7:00pm – 8:00pm (Enter by side door to hall from big playground and exit by the same door.)

ANY DONATIONS OF CAKES GRATEFULLY RECEIVED, please bring to the school office on the day of the disco. Prices for cakes range from 10p-20p at the disco.

Y6 SATS Parent Workshop

On Thursday 22nd January at 18:00, Mrs Wilson will hold a parent workshop about the Y6 SATS over Teams. An email to Year 6 parents has been sent out with a link to the meeting.

Kindest regards

Justine Watkins